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used were not at present satisfactory to the Post-office Department. For the purpose of absolute safety a double security was required, and the wooden box must be itself enclosed in a metal case. A feasible method of accomplishing this has now been introduced by the club by wrapping around the box a sheet of thin brass, left open at the ends and held in place by the twine with which the box is tied up. This method is approved by the department, and is only a trifling addition to the weight or expensiveness of the box; and the brass cover can be used without renewal for an indefinite length of time. The following officers have been elected: President, Rev. Samuel Lockwood, of Freehold, N. J.; secretary, Rev. A. B. Hervey, of Taunton, Mass.; assistant secretary and treasurer, Joseph McKay, 24 Liberty street, Troy, N. Y.; managers, R. H. Ward, M.D., Troy, N. Y., and C. M. Vorce, Cleveland, O.

A NEW LOCAL CLUB.—Early in August the "Griffith Club of Microscopy" was organized at Detroit, Prof. Samuel A. Jones being chairman of the meeting. The new club was well represented at the Buffalo meeting of the American Society of Microscopists. It is proposed to hold weekly meetings for study and work, beginning October 1st, at a private office.

WEST CHESTER PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.—This society is taking a place among the most active and successful microscopical societies. At the September meeting an excellent note on the fertilization of plants, with special relation to the question of insect fertilization, was read by Dr. J. R. McClurg, chairman of the Microscopical Section. In opposition to the theory of Darwin, Lubbock and others, that the sweets (and colors?) of flowers exist expressly for insects, in order to attract their visits and thus secure cross-fertilization, he states with much prominence, if not formal approval, the theory of Rev. Geo. Henslow, that the sweets existed before insects used them, though they have been subsequently increased by such use; that self-fertilization and not cross-fertilization is natural to the plants, and that self-sterility has resulted from habitual insect fertilization, and is therefore a dire necessity and not an original and beneficial trait. Mr. Wm. T. Haines also delivered an able address on cryptogamic botany, in which the beauties of the Pezizas and the ethics of scientific intercourse were dwelt upon with equal vigor and effect.

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## SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— Some interesting suggestions as to the evolution of the Vertebrata appear in Prof. Parker's Hunterian Lectures, recently reported in *Nature*. He recognizes "how thoroughly intermediate between the true reptiles and birds, the extinct birds of the chalk and the oölite were." As regards the mammals he says:

"Such a hypothesis as that nature had either all her birds or all her mammals from one stock is at once upset by the facts presented by the structure of the lowest mammals, the duck-billed Platypus and the Echidna. Between the mammals and the types which foreshadow them, viz: the Selachians and the Batrachians, there is unfortunately a large chasm, and, moreover, the Platypus and Echidna refuse to lie fairly in the direction indicated at the top of this chasm, or they confusingly partake of the characters of the reptile and bird; as well as those which are peculiarly mammalian \* \* \* as already mentioned, the forecast of the mammalian type, which is very plain in the cartilaginous fishes, becomes much more plain, definite and indubitable in the frog and toad. In fact, the building materials are passed from hand to hand, as it were, in this way: the batrachian forefathers brought down all things meet for the work, borrowing and taking cartilages from the Selachians and bones from the Ganoids, and noiselessly forming them, after due selection, into a new, more compounded and noble structure. The rude ancestors of the tribes that give suck began to build on this higher level 'until the consummation was effected of vertebrate form.' But the consummation of all, the election and selection that has been going on since the beginning of the ages, is seen in man, who alone gives meaning to, and reads the meaning of, the whole mystery of organic life."

— From his recent studies on the habits of the cotton-worm moth, Prof. C. V. Riley concludes, in a paper lately read before the National Academy of Sciences, that the species is not represented by the egg, larva or chrysalis in the winter, but that the moth hibernates. His paper ends as follows: "My own belief now is that the moth really survives the winter in the more southern portions of the cotton belt, as on the Sea islands of Georgia and in parts of Florida and Texas, and that it is from this more southern portion that it spreads this year."

"This belief, which yet lacks full confirmation, does not preclude the occasional coming of the moth from foreign, more tropical countries, or the possibility of its being brought by favorable winds from such exterior regions; though the fact is established that it could not have come from the Bahamas since 1866."

"The question has an important practical bearing, for, on the theory of the insect's ability to remain with us, much important fall and winter work of a preventive nature may be done in destroying the moths; whereas on the theory of its annual perishing and necessarily coming from foreign countries, no such preventive measures are left to the planter. The time employed in baiting and destroying the last brood of moths in autumn will be wasted, and he must helplessly await the coming of the parent the ensuing spring, and deal as best he can with the progeny."

— The papers read before the British Association at its last meeting, so far as reports in *Nature* and elsewhere show, comprised nothing especially noteworthy. The address of Prof. St. George Mivart before the Biological Section was on Buffon; that of Prof. Lankester was on Degeneration, an extension of some speculations made by Dr. Dohrn, while in anthropology the address of Mr. Tylor was interesting and useful. The meeting of the French Association was not characterized by any papers of a high degree of interest. The sixty-second meeting of Swiss Naturalists at St. Gall, was well attended, and Prof. Vogt, in a brilliant lecture, exhibited very good photographs of the second more perfect specimen of *Archæopteryx* found at Solenhofen, which, according to the report in *Nature*, “proves undoubtedly that we have to do with a bird-like reptile of the size of a pigeon, which had both scales and feathers, a beak provided with teeth, armed wings, bird-like feet with nails and a reptile tail consisting of twenty vertebræ.” On the whole the Saratoga meeting of the American Association was characterized by apparently quite as able papers as those read at Sheffield, or Montpellier, or St. Gall. The British and French Associations made large grants for scientific research, an example which might be followed to better advantage to science by our association, than by printing a volume of transactions for gratuitous distribution, and maintaining a library, and paying office rent, and clerical assistance.

— Prof. Archibald Geikie is now delivering, in Boston, a course of Lowell lectures on earth-sculpture. He is well known in this country as the leading geologist of Scotland. He was appointed on the Geological Survey of Great Britain in 1855, and director of the Geological Survey of Scotland in 1867, and in December, 1870, to the new chair of mineralogy and geology in the University of Edinburgh, established by Sir Roderick Murchison and the Crown. He has written many important memoirs on geology and kindred subjects. He published the *Story of a Boulder* in 1858, and the *Life of Edward Forbes* in 1861; the *Phenomena of Glacial Drift in Scotland* in 1863; *Scenery of Scotland, &c.*, in 1865; *Memoirs of Sir Roderick Murchison*, in two volumes, in 1874, with several elementary text books on geology and physical geography; articles in *Quarterly Journal of Geological Society of London* and other societies; in the *Quarterly* and *North British Reviews*. He has recently received a gold medal from the Royal Society of Edinburgh, for his memoirs on the Old Red Sandstone of Western Europe. He arrived in New York and started for the West August 12th, visiting the Yellowstone Park, Salt Lake, Wasatch and Uinta mountains, to study the glacial phenomena of those regions, returning East, Oct. 1st.

— The U. S. Geological and Topographical Survey, under the direction of Clarence King, has been fully organized, and has been

in the field of its proposed operations. It was the intention of Mr. King to devote the summer mainly to practical economic work, making as thorough an examination as possible of western mineral lands, and determining as far as practicable the nature, origin, geology, location and distribution of the various classes of ores. Mr. King's personal attention has been given mainly to the celebrated Comstock lode, in Nevada, and the central gold fields of California. He is assisted by Arnold Hague, late imperial minister expert for China, Mr. J. K. Gilbert, and Prof. F. V. Hayden. The specialists of the expedition in mining geology are Prof. Raphael Pumpelly, late of Harvard College, Prof. George F. Becker, professor of mining geology in the University of California, and Arthur Foot. The fields especially worked are, first, the metallic region of Colorado, centering at Leadville, in charge of S. F. Emmons, geologist, with A. D. Wilson as topographer; second, the lead-silver region centering at Eureka, Nevada, in charge of Prof. Becker, with F. A. Clark as topographer, and third, the Comstock lode and central gold fields of California, in charge of Mr. King, with the assistants previously mentioned.

— Dr. John B. Trask, at one time State Geologist of California, and who afterwards held a similar position in the State of Nevada, died in San Francisco on the 3d of July, at the age of 55. Dr. Trask was one of the founders of the California Academy of Sciences, and contributed many papers to the earlier volumes of its publications. Of late years he has followed his profession as a skillful medical practitioner, and will be remembered as a sympathetic and kind hearted man as well as a public spirited and useful citizen.

— The Visitors' Catalogue of the Museum of the Peabody Academy of Science, at Salem, Mass., is noteworthy not only from its neat appearance, but from its educational features, as the references to the specimens in the cases is preceded by a brief popular account of the different classes of animals, and with a sufficiently full list of articles and books contained in the libraries of Salem, referring to the animals, especially of Essex county. It is also provided with an index.

— The Seventh Annual Report of the Zoölogical Society of Philadelphia indicates the prosperity of this very successful project. The total excess of visitors over the attendance of last year was 76,966. On the 4th of July, 1878, 6,389 visitors were admitted. The floating debt of the society was reduced to from \$20,500 to \$9,000. There were at the time the report was made 826 vertebrates in the collection.

— A popular résumé of Prof. Mœbius' late work on Eozoön, a memoir in quarto with eighteen colored plates in the *Palæontographica*, has been published in *Die Natur* for 1879, Nos. 7, 8, 10, under the title of, Is Eozoön a fossil Rhizopod? It is illustrated

by twenty-one woodcuts, and is an interesting and, to some minds, will be a conclusive argument against the idea that Eozoön is of organic nature.

— The second part of Whiteave's volume on the Mesozoic fossils of the Geological Survey of Canada has lately been issued. It is devoted to a description of the fossils of the Cretaceous rocks of Vancouver and adjacent islands in the straits of Georgia, British Columbia. It is illustrated by excellent figures on ten plates.

— The Congrès international des Américanistes opened at Brussels September 23d. The object of the congress is to contribute to the progress of ethnological, linguistic and historical studies relative to the two Americas, especially before the time of Christopher Columbus.

— The Royal Society has issued a thick extra volume of the Philosophical Transactions (Vol. 168) containing a full account of the collections, botanical and zoölogical, made during the Transit of Venus Expedition of 1874-5, in Kerguelen island and Rodriguez.

— The tenth annual Report of the American Museum of Natural History shows progress in the increase of its collection, and especially in the deposits made of large and useful scientific libraries, which will tend to make the museum useful in advancing science.

— The Swedish Government intends to purchase the house and estate of Hammarby, near Upsala, which was the residence of Linnæus during the latter part of his life, and has appropriated for the purpose the sum of 80,000 crowns.

— There has been established at Messina a laboratory of maritime zoölogy similar to those already formed at Naples and Trieste, on the Mediterranean, and at Concarneau, Roscoff and Wimereux, on the Atlantic.

— A recent paper states that smoke has lately been seen to issue from Mount Hood, Oregon. Is this statement correct; if so, will some of our Pacific coast subscribers send us information in regard to the matter?

— The director of the Central Park Menagerie, of New York city, reports 486 additions to the collection during 1878, the total number of animals exhibited being 1,060.

— The eminent coleopterist, Dr. J. L. Le Conte, of Philadelphia, has been elected an honorary member of the Société Entomologique de France.

— The Sponges of the Gulf of Mexico have been elaborated by Oscar Schmidt in a work published in Jena.

ERRATUM.—In my notice of Prof. Smith's Stalk-eyed Crustacea of the Atlantic coast, p. 514 line forty, of the August number of this journal, for *Carcinus* read *Calcinus*.—J. S. K.